



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

ICE AGENTS SEIZE THOUSANDS OF PIRATED MUSIC CDs AND MOTION PICTURE DVDs

MCALLEN, Texas — As part of the federal government's ongoing efforts to stop the illegal sale of counterfeit motion picture and music media, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents executed a search warrant Wednesday at the Val Verde Flea Market in Donna, Texas, resulting in the seizure of thousands of items.

A total of 8,725 DVDs and CDs were seized at the scene, each of them being sold for about \$10. No arrests were made during the execution of the search warrant. ICE special agents will continue the investigation.

"Illegally manufacturing and selling pirated CDs and DVDs is a serious crime that harms the entire creative community of musicians, filmmakers, retailers and others who bring entertainment and art to the public," said Alonzo Pena, special agent-in-charge of the San Antonio ICE office.

"Yesterday's seizure should send a clear message: We will not tolerate the theft of intellectual property."

In recent years, counterfeiting, piracy, and other Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) violations have grown in magnitude and complexity, costing U.S. businesses billions of dollars in lost revenue and often posing health and safety risks to U.S. consumers. In 1998, the International Chamber of Commerce estimated that five to seven percent of world trade was comprised of counterfeit goods, a market worth some \$350 billion. In May 2004, the United States Trade Representative published its annual Special 301 Report in which it estimated that U.S. industry alone loses \$200 to \$250 billion to counterfeiting annually.

As the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) plays a leading role in targeting criminal organizations responsible for producing, smuggling, and distributing counterfeit products. ICE investigations focus not only on

keeping counterfeit products off U.S. streets, but also on dismantling the criminal organizations behind this activity.

In fiscal year 2004, ICE agents arrested 218 individuals and brought 140 indictments for IPR violations, roughly double the 132 arrests and 70 indictments the prior fiscal year. At the same time, ICE agents and U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) officers together made 7,255 seizures of counterfeit goods worth \$138 million in FY 2004, up from the roughly 6,500 seizures worth \$94 million the prior year. Together, ICE and CBP have seized more than \$600 million worth of counterfeit goods from FY 1998 through FY 2004.

To report suspicious activity involving this type of criminal activity, call the ICE hotline at 866-DHS-2ICE. You may also call U.S. Department of Commerce to report suspected counterfeit and piracy law violations at 866-999-HALT.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.